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**1962/10/02**

Approved in S 1/7/63

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PART I (of 4)

October 2, 1962

10:30 a.m. -

12:30 p.m.

Informal Meeting of Foreign Ministers of  
the American Republics, Washington, D. C.,  
October 2-3, 1962.

See Attached List of Participants

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The Secretary of State opened the meeting with a few welcoming remarks, recalling the first informal meeting of American Foreign Ministers held in September, 1958. He suggested that the current meeting have no formal agenda, voting nor resolutions. He expressed the hope that there would be no statements to the press during the meeting. The Secretary discussed the free world confrontation of communism, the most direct of which, he said, extended from Berlin to Korea and now had reached this hemisphere. In speaking of signs of harsher measures being applied by the Soviet Union, he noted the failure to reach an agreement on disarmament arrangements and Soviet rejection of the nuclear test ban. Regarding Berlin, the Secretary noted that the Soviet proposals were aimed at the removal of Western forces and undermining Berlin's security. He noted the steady improvement of the active war in Viet-Nam where 10,000 U. S. troops were serving. He observed that we would be watching closely the October 7 deadline for withdrawal in Laos in accordance with the Geneva accord. He spoke of problems confronting the Soviets, and, referred specifically to production failures in East Germany and North Viet-Nam and setbacks in mainland China. He noted the Soviet fear of the European Common Market, and contrasted United States preparedness to open trade opportunities with that Market through new trade legislation. He noted the growing nationalism in certain Soviet bloc countries. The Secretary cautioned that in spite of

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these problems in the Communist world, we can take no comfort because "Khrushchev may take dangerous measures." However, the Secretary stressed, the United States has enough nuclear power to destroy the Soviet Union if it should try a sneak attack.

In turning to Communist penetration in this hemisphere, he reviewed briefly the resolutions adopted at the Eighth WHM and specifically recalled the voting on several of those resolutions. He said that, as Castro has continued to fade as the hope of the Western Hemisphere, he has obtained additional Communist support which involves further Soviet intervention. He noted that thousands of bloc technicians had arrived in Cuba, spoke of the air defense build-up there, and noted that for the first time an extra-continental power had established missile bases in the Western Hemisphere. He gave certain statistics on bloc ships and cargos carried to Cuba. He said 12 sites in Western Cuba would be operational in the next few weeks for launching ground-to-air missiles which could attain an altitude of from 60 to 80,000 feet and a lateral range of 25 miles. He noted the presence in Cuba of high quality MiGs and Komar class ships on naval patrol. He said that because of the complex electronic equipment supplied to Cuba, the Soviet technicians would probably stay for some time to give training in the use of this equipment. He said there was no sign yet of significant offensive equipment.

The Secretary noted that the United States had already taken certain measures including declarations on the limit of the military build-up in Cuba which the United States would permit, warning that U.S. forces would move into action if the arms in Cuba were used outside of Cuba and that the United States would not permit the development of Cuba as a Soviet base. He recalled the warnings that any attack on Guantanamo or the establishment of ground-to-ground ballistics missiles would not be tolerated, but noted that there had been no signs to date that the Soviets intended to go that far.

The Secretary stressed that the recent developments in Cuba had made a profound impact on the American people and noted there always existed a danger of action which would mean bloodshed and casualties, especially in Cuba. He said it was better for the Foreign Ministers to try to find another way to solve the problem and invited them to give an assessment of the situation in their countries.

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The Secretary said it was expected there would be a step-up in training activity in Cuba, financial aid to subversive groups and subversive propaganda by the press and radio throughout the hemisphere and, if there was a chance, active support of subversive efforts with arms, even to overthrow governments by force. He mentioned specifically support to student, labor, sports, and cultural groups. He cautioned that we must anticipate that the Soviets will hide their efforts under the aegis of international law while working to destroy it. He noted that Dorticos will be going to the United Nations and that he will probably make wild charges and stressed that a systematic diplomatic effort was needed in the UN to help others better understand the true situation.

The Secretary specified two lines of action to counter Soviet intervention in Cuba: (1) make it more difficult and costly for the Soviet Bloc to supply Cuba, and (2) demonstrate that what the Soviet Union does in Cuba will not affect the hemisphere, that is, to isolate Cuba. He said that we must also inform our friends around the world that Cuba represents a new penetration by the Bloc in a part of the world which wants to be free.

The Secretary noted that certain NATO and other countries were prepared to take steps to prevent their ships from being used in the Bloc-Cuba trade but that others appeared less anxious to help.

The Secretary stressed that it must be made clear to the rest of the world that the regime in Cuba would fail. He said that we must reassure the Cuban people, both inside and outside Cuba that their cause has not been abandoned. He emphasized that the question of Cuba had not been discussed with the Soviet Union, that the United States did not want Cuba regarded as related to the Berlin "affair".

In closing, his initial remarks, the Secretary suggested that a communique might be issued at the end of the meeting and invited suggestions in this regard.

The Foreign Minister of Nicaragua, Alfonso ORTEGA Urbina, expressed the great preoccupation of his country at the "vital problem" of Communist bases in Cuba. He pointed out that the small countries do not have the same means of protection that large countries do and consequently, their worry was how to

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stay free. He acknowledged that the United States was prepared to stop arms movement into Central America but pointed out that small movements, including men, couldn't be prevented by surveillance. He pointed out that some small countries have only small or no armies and that police forces could not cope with these problems.

He said that Communist activity in small countries was hurting their economies, that because of unsettled conditions any investment was paralyzed. He emphasized that a collective defensive procedure was needed to detain the Communist advances in Central America. He said that Central American countries had insufficient naval craft adequately to patrol their long coasts. Therefore, they were looking for a regional formula. He also discussed the Soviet efforts to develop a cultural and social system foreign to this hemisphere.

The Secretary again recalled the decisions of the Eighth Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and pointed out that this meeting was to obtain the views of the main body of the OAS countries regarding dangers arising in special areas.

The Representative of Argentina, Roberto T. ALEMANN, expressed the clear concern of his Government at Soviet penetration in Cuba and its effect in the hemisphere. He said that an effort should be made to contain the danger and with this in mind, the Argentine Delegation was prepared to discuss this matter. He said that the first law of self-defense is to strengthen the ties of the countries concerned and pointed out that these countries are linked by "serious commitments" which should guide them in their deliberation. He said that countries in other parts of the world should also think of what they can do regarding this danger.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Bonilla Atilas, spoke of the world as divided into two ideologies: (1) Communist, and (2) democratic. He said that Moscow was the leader of the Communist sector and asked the Secretary if the United States is willing to be the standard bearer for the free world.

The Secretary, in reply, pointed out the difference between leadership in the Communist world and the free world, the latter being made up of free nations with which the United States was allied in different ways. He cited NATO as one example, but

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pointed out that the United States had 42 other Allies around the world. He noted the tremendous increase in the United States peacetime defense budget in the past 15 years. He noted that the United States is the only member of the free world, other than Viet-Nam, that was suffering casualties at this time in fighting communist aggression. The United States, he said, will accept the leadership, but others also have a responsibility in the struggle for freedom. He pointed out that we must act through cooperation and solidarity on the basis of elements of freedom and not of unilateral decisions which affect other peoples elsewhere in the world; this, he said, is why we wish to consult on this matter.

The DOMINICAN Secretary for Foreign Affairs spoke of his gratitude at being in the free world, but noted that Soviet leadership up to now had been for measures to spread communism throughout the world. The position of the free world, he said, is weak, not militarily but ideologically. He referred to the Report of the Special Consultative Committee on Security (SCCS) in response to the Dominican request regarding the propaganda broadcasts from Cuba beamed at the Dominican Republic. He noted that the SCCS emphasized the importance of propaganda and counter-propaganda. He said that, as he had said in New York earlier, the countries must mobilize themselves in this field. He said that the Soviet Bloc is mobilized and identifies the United States as the main enemy. The Soviet technique is first ideological penetration, then penetration by arms. He said Cuba fell because the apple was ripe, that this was made possible by advance groundwork. He said we need a system of counter-propaganda to prepare the spirit of our peoples. He proposed the creation of a hemispheric center to train the people to lead in this effort. This training should be indoctrination in an aggressive type of democracy. For this, he said, we need money, equipment, and "democratic armies". He spoke of general mobilization and the coordination of efforts within each country patterned on that done by the United States during World War II. To explain to our peoples what is taking place, we must have radio stations operating "26 hours" a day and our Journalists must be more conscious of the struggle, he said, and added that the people must be trained and a corps set up similar to the Peace Corps but differing in that the former would be an army of "aggressive democrats".

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He said Cuba must explode eventually, but we must do our utmost to avoid a tragic result when this happens.

The GUATEMALAN Foreign Minister, Mr. Jesús UNDA Murillo, spoke briefly of the purpose of the meeting and expressed confidence that the meeting would result in the cooperation of the countries. He said Cuba was the most serious threat. He referred to his remarks at the Eighth NFM concerning the Cuban danger and said that it had become unbelievably more serious since that time. He referred to the Communist military build-up in Cuba and spoke of it as a challenge to the United States and to the rest of the hemisphere. He noted the threats of the Soviet Bloc regarding thermonuclear warfare if we adopt defensive measures against what is happening in Cuba. He said that Guatemala had been pointing out the danger for years and referred to the statements he had made at the Seventh and Eighth NFM's and in the 14th UNGA regarding the need to take defensive measures. He pointed out that he had emphasized the need to define our positions and to save democracy for our people, that Guatemala would support all measures necessary but unfortunately some countries had not listened with candor. The Foreign Minister referred to the Communist gains in his country in the early 1950's. He expressed awareness that Guatemala's attitude provokes insults by the Communists but it knows its cause is just. He emphasized that there is no such thing in Communists' eyes as a neutral or non-allied state, that one is either Communist or reactionary, and the reactionaries are liquidated. He said it was most important that American Governments be prepared to defend themselves, that Communism must not be regarded as a mystic theory but recognized as brutal machinery aimed at dominating the world. However, he commented, the free countries are weak. He said that the Soviets were attempting to achieve through Castro: (1) to reduce the resistance of the Cuban people, (2) to make Cuba a fort against free countries of the Western Hemisphere, and (3) a base for engaging in subversion and aiding insurgency.

The Foreign Minister said that Resolution VIII of the Eighth NFM gave the Council power to extend the suspension of trade with Cuba in arms and implements of war to other items of strategic importance. He said that the COAS should adopt a resolution to interrupt all trade with Cuba and that it should also (1) request the IADB to bring up to date the continental defense plans and prepare a plan for the protection of the hemisphere against the encroachments of Communism and (2) instruct the SCCS to prepare a report on Communist subversion in all its aspects including agents, propaganda, smuggling of weapons, etc. He emphasized that we can delay no longer if we are to avoid a war that will annihilate mankind.

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The Foreign Minister of HONDURAS, Andrés ALVARADO Puerto, said that Honduras is in the central area of danger in the Hemisphere, that it was a country of poor and ignorant people, but a people with great spirit. He spoke of the efforts of the democratic regime in Honduras to start a democratic revolution but referred to the extreme circumstances the country faced. He said that the Honduran people had been able to fight the Communists in the streets and in the newspapers because of their faith. He said there was need to develop a political action program. Because Honduras is near Cuba, the Honduran people are worried, he said, and added that a movement should be started to increase the faith of all the Latin American peoples and that Honduras was "in complete agreement with any measures because Communists only understand force." He said, "We have to be determined to fight."

The Foreign Minister noted that Central American countries had exchanged views concerning this problem and they felt that this exchange of views should be expanded to the Caribbean area so that steps can be taken. The Caribbean area is the most affected by the menace in Cuba but the problem is worldwide. He recognized that the small countries cannot express ideas that might lead to war but added they cannot remain inactive in the face of this danger, which affects the United States and other hemisphere countries.

The Secretary, in thanking the Honduran Foreign Minister, emphasized that the underlying issue was not bilateral, but the independence of free states and that once this could be assured there could be no cold nor hot war. The Secretary urged that his colleagues explain this to their representatives in the United Nations so that they could see this clearly and express it in their statements there. He added that, in resolving the problem facing the hemisphere of the Communist threat in Cuba, we should not think of it in terms of the danger of a thermonuclear war. He concluded that Cuba is not vital to the Soviet Union and Khrushchev will not destroy the Soviet Union over Cuba.

(The preceding conversations were carried on through interpreters.)

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